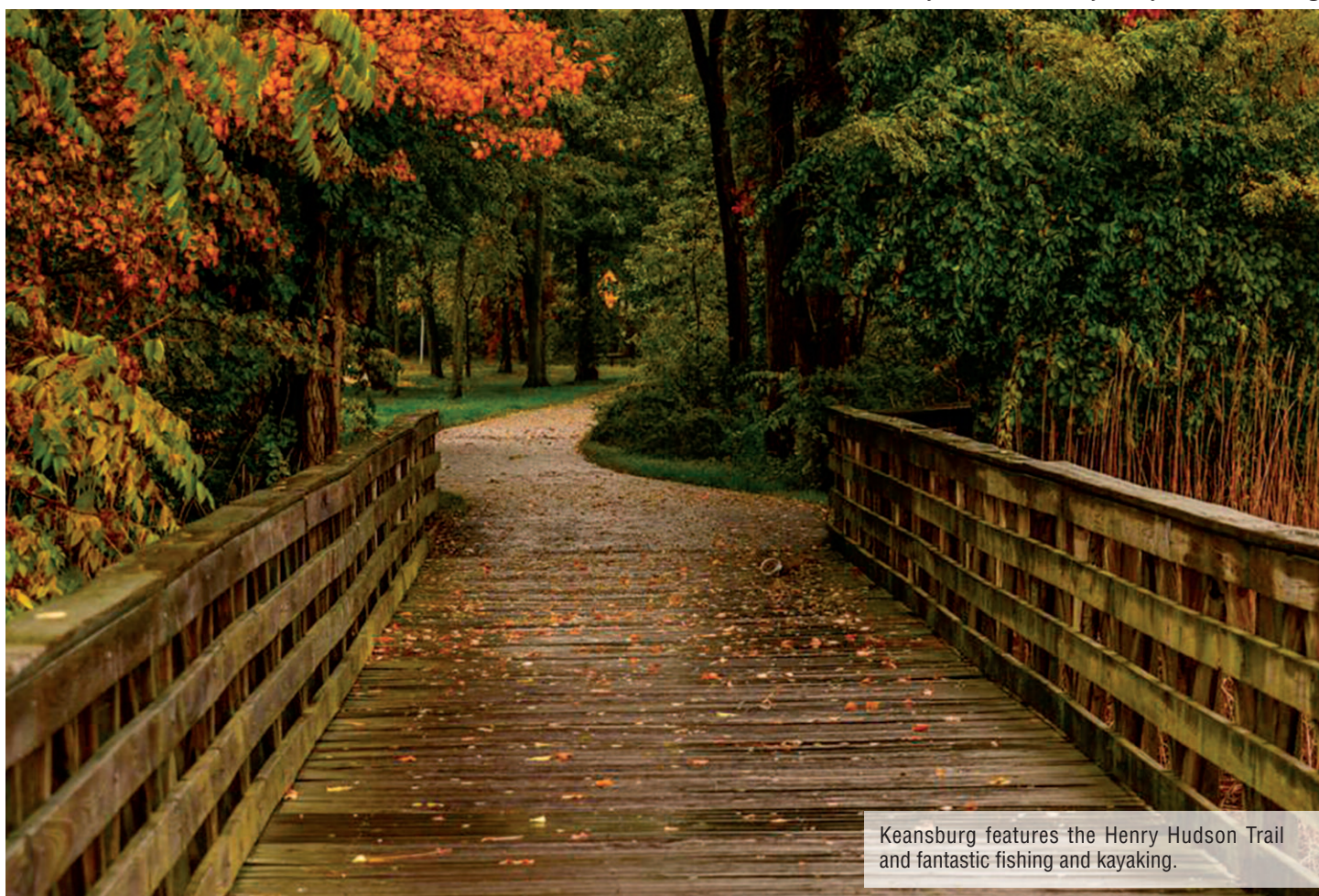


Moving in the Right Direction

Keansburg sets out to realize its potential through a combination of promotion and planning

By Thomas Foley, Mayor, Keansburg



Keansburg features the Henry Hudson Trail and fantastic fishing and kayaking.

My sons and I recently watched the movie *Cars*. The animated film takes place in Radiator Springs, a fictional town longing for the heydays before a new highway diverted traffic away from the town's main thoroughfare.

The Borough of Keansburg, where I have been Mayor since July 2014, reminds me a bit of Radiator Springs. On the coastline of the Raritan Bay, Keansburg started out as a resort town in 1917. I was born and raised here, and my family dates back to near the time Keansburg was founded. My great grandfather built the house in which I live, and my mother's family is from here, too. My father and grandfather talked about how the town used to be a bustling place, a hot spot for vacationers into the 1960s.

Sadly, two things have changed since then. First, in the '60s a storm destroyed the pier that docked ferries and used to house steamships. Second, and most impactful, was the completion of the Garden State Parkway that took traffic further south of the town.

Polish and Promotion Despite the decline in tourism, Keansburg still has many attractions and a great quality of life. With a little polish and promotion, the town's leadership is working to bring back the town's popularity. Our campaign



In the future, we envision a year-round beach-area entertainment district, where music venues and restaurants will be prominent.

will seek to highlight our recreational and community assets and correct any outdated misconceptions.

Keansburg is quiet, unique, historical and affordable—just what many potential residents are looking for.

Amenities Our town features the Henry Hudson Trail and fantastic fishing and kayaking. There's also a free beach (one of the first you can reach from northern New Jersey), as well as an amusement park and water park. The short distance to New York City—less than an hour by ferry or train—is also appealing. But the clincher is the incredible view of the New York City skyline from our coastline.

In the future, we envision a year-round beach-area entertainment district, where music venues and restaurants will be prominent. Further we plan to develop a business district that will address everyday needs by including basic businesses, such as a pharmacy, banks, delis and a bakery.

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Rebranding To help move Keansburg forward, the borough recently hired a public relations and marketing firm to rebrand and promote our town. We've also approved a new logo that depicts the relaxed, inviting mood here.

With a little polish and promotion, the town's leadership is working to bring back the town's popularity.

Our business association recently started up again. To show off our town, we are holding more community events. I'm happy to say our new Zombies vs. Super Heroes walk, held the day after Halloween, received rave reviews on

Facebook. We're looking forward to an even larger turn out next year. We are also in the beginning stages of starting an annual Christmas festival.

Open for Business The Borough Council and I are also getting the word out that Keansburg is "open for new business." A Mexican restaurant, Chilango's, has moved into town with plans to open in 2015. In addition, we have driven several developers around town. Borough Council is also providing five year tax abatements and/or exemptions for the construction of commercial or industrial structures.

After Superstorm Sandy, the borough pursued grants to help revitalize Keansburg. We received a \$1.1 million Stronger NJ Neighborhood and Community Revitalization Streetscape Revitalization grant from the New Jersey Economic Develop-

ment Authority. A portion of the grant, totaling \$450,000, will be used to revitalize the Main Street and Carr Avenue commercial districts.

Flood Insurance Discount In addition, to encourage businesses and help our residents, a 15 percent discount on flood insurance is being offered via a Community Rating System (CRS)—another program that our Council pursued. After Sandy, more than 50 homes have been rebuilt with very little cost to the homeowners. When we finish, the town will look very different. Some neighborhoods have been transformed dramatically and look like new developments.

However, Council and I would like to see more than tourists come to the area. We would also like to see more families and empty-nesters move to town. Our expanding school system is eager to fill their classrooms with new children. We just broke ground on a 122,000-square-foot elementary school which will house 750 students in kindergarten through fourth grades. It is slated to open in September 2016.

In September, we unveiled three new tennis courts at Collins Field at the corner of Wood Street and Wood Avenue. The Keansburg Titans tennis team was thrilled to have courts they could call home.

I often think you have to live here to truly understand what makes this town special. This is a tightly knit community that takes great pride in its borough. You know the people who live next to you. Residents help each other out. If something needs fixed, we'll roll up our sleeves and fix it ourselves—or find the resources to get the job done.

Keansburg is moving in the right direction—we invite you to visit and experi-



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